

ART. XI.—*Case of Aseites, in which the patient was tapped, in ten years, one hundred and eighty-six times, and had seven hundred and fifty-one and three-fourth gallons of water drawn off.* By JOHN H. GRIFFIN, M. D., of Virginia.

In the report of the following ease, I am forced to rely mainly on the statement of Mr. Armstrong, the hnsband of the lady who is the snbjct of it, as all the physicians who attended her, or had an opportunity of examining it, except myself (Drs. Nash, Dawson, Dillon, and Bentley), are now dead, and my own recollection, after the lapse of seventeen years, is too indistinet to be relied on, especiaally as I had bnt two opportnities of investigating it, and did not then anticipate that the duty of reporting it wold devolve on me. The statements of Mr. Armstrong, however, a man of intelligenee, who took notes at the time, may be fully relied on, as far as they go; and it is chiefly to be regretted that more is not known of the early history of the ease, the appearance, growth, size, &c., of the tumours, which evidently caused the dropsical effusion.

I am informed, by Mr. Armstrong, that his wife first began to complain in the fall of 1820, then 25 years old, when she was attaeked with severe pain in the left side, and that, after it had continned for some time, a tumour made its appearance in the left hypogastric region, or, to use his own langnage, “between the middle of the abdomen and the upper part of the hip bone.” At this time, she was attended by Dr. G. P. Nash, who, he thinks, considered it an enlarged spleen, and continued to preseribe under this impression, until the next spring, when two others made their appearance on the right side, one of which attained the size of a man’s fist, the other remained stationary after it was first observed. The tumour on the left side was larger than either of those on the right, of an irregular, knotted, pyramidal shape, whieh, rising ont of the pelvis, oecupied a considerable portion of the left side of the cavity of the abdomen, and, when I examined it (August, 1832), was tender to the toneh. She continned to take medieine at intervals, until the 22d of February, 1826, when an abortion of a male foetns took placee, supposed to be at the third month of pregnaney. In 1830, she was first observed to be dropsical, when Dr. S. G. Dawson, late of Putnam, Olio, was requested to see her, and who continned to attend her until the summer of 1832. On the 22d of June, following, she was delivered of two male children, supposed to be at the sixth month of pregnaney; one of which lived twenty-four honrs, the other was born dead. After this, “remedies for dropsy” were occasionally, thongh not very perseveringly, used until the summer or fall of 1832, when they were finally abandoned.

On the 22d of November, 1830, she was first tapped (by Dr. Dawson), when six and a half gallons of water were drawn off. She was not again tapped until the 8th of October of the following year. After this, the water

continued to accumulate rapidly. In 1832 she was tapped ten times, in 1833 twenty-six times, in 1834 twenty-five times, in 1835 twenty-six times, in 1836 twenty-seven times, in 1837 twenty-six times, in 1838 twenty-six times, in 1839 seventeen times, and in March, 1840, she was tapped for the last time—in all, *one hundred and eighty-six times* (186), and *seven hundred and fifty-one and three-fourths* ($751\frac{1}{4}$) gallons of water, of a clear straw colour, drawn off. The size of the tumours gradually diminished, until they finally disappeared, but could be distinctly felt, on either side of the pelvis, for some time after the last tapping; since which time she has enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health. Indeed, during the entire period, her general health continued good, and she suffered but little except the inconvenience caused by the accumulation of the water. She is now able to walk several miles, without fatigue, which I have frequently, within the last few weeks, known her do, in her benevolent attentions to the sick of her neighbourhood.

I am aware that a number of cases have been reported, in which the operation of tapping has been borne a great number of times, and that in some, an almost incredible quantity of water has been drawn off. In the April number of this Journal, a case is referred to by Professor Peaslee, of Dartmouth College, mentioned by Burard, in which the patient was tapped 665 *times* in 13 years. In the case reported in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1784 by Martineau, referred to by Watson, the patient, in twenty-six years, was tapped eighty times and 6631 *pts.* or upwards of 13 hogsheads of fluid drawn off.